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LEADER
Lexington, Ky.
17 March 1978

# CIA's Breckinridge walks tightrope between candor, secrecy

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For many years, former Lexington attorney Scott D. Breckinridge, 60, "couldn't say a word" about his work for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

But times have changed and Breckinridge, a deputy inspector general for the CIA and younger brother of Kentucky Congressman John B. Breckinridge, can now speak openly — within limits, that is.

"The problem," Breckinridge told a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Lexington Thursday, "is how far to go without releasing vital secrets."

"For a long time, we have been terribly confidential in what we would release to the public," explained the 1941 University of Kentucky Law School graduate who once coached UK's fencing team.

But Adm. Stansfield Turner, the new CIA director, believes modern times call for "greater openness" in the intelligence community, Breckinridge said, and the public can look forward to more CIA papers being released and more public speeches on agency activities.

What must be balanced in this new policy of openness, Breckinridge continued, are "essential secrets," such as names of CIA sources abroad, and "the public's need and right to know."

Prior to joining the U.S. Navy in 1942, Breckinridge worked as an economic analyst with the Board of Economic Welfare. During World War II, he served in the Caribbean, North and South Atlantic areas.

After working for the Veterans Administration, Breckinridge opened law offices in Lexington in 1947. In 1952, he ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination for Fayette County Attorney against Scott Reed, now a justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court.

Breckinridge joined the CIA in 1953, serving both at home and abroad. In 1963, he joined the CIA's Inspector General's office and, 10 years later, was appointed deputy inspector general.

During World War II, Breckinridge told the Rotarians Thursday, "wartime intelligence was relatively simple." But after the war, many felt the country no longer needed such intelligence efforts.

A "rude awakening" occurred, however, when the Soviet Union "subverted" Eastern European countries between 1946 and 1948, Breckinridge said, and "Communist insurgency" surfaced in Greece, Iran, India, Burma and other nations.

Western European countries "felt alone and uncertain about their capabilities of defending themselves," he added, and the U.S. found itself "in the unfamiliar position of being the leader of the free world."

Since that time, the U.S. intelligence community has become more sophisticated in its ability to collect and analyze data, whereas before it was "long on analysis and short on facts," according to Breckinridge.

The wars in Southeast Asia were "the last echoes of the extreme tensions of the Cold War," said the CIA agent, but the current era of detente "has not gone a long way to reduce the need for intelligence."

The Soviets still must be watched, he said, because of their continued support of socialist nations and their dedication to a worldwide political structure "similar to their own."

A crisis may surface in some foreign country and "we must know it well," Breckinridge continued. And the Third World and oil-producing countries must be watched because of their importance to the U.S. economy and foreign policy.

"The absence of some of the crises of the Cold War have given us a chance to stop and reflect," said Breckinridge of the intelligence community, and the policies of the CIA and other such agencies are currently under review.

The Carter administration has developed "new sets of mechanisms to improve the way we do things in Washington," he said, and for the first time to involve "senior policy levels in making decisions" about the activities of the various intelligence agencies.